

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 5504

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TAGS: PFOR, PINR, YO , UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN YUGOSLAVIA: GORSHKOV VISIT

REF: A. USNATO 4569 B. BELGRADE 4443

1. IN ADDITION DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE REF A AND TO REF B,
USNATO MAY FIND FOLLOWING CURRENT READOUT FROM HERE HELPFUL
IN AUGUST 24 POLADS MEETING:

2. DENIAL TO SOVIETS OF EGYPTIAN PORTS LEADS TO CONSIDERATION
OF WHERE IN MED CAN SOVS NOW TURN. YUGOSLAVIA, OBVIOUSLY,
ONE POSSIBILITY. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SOVS HAVE BEEN
PRESSURING YUGOSLAVS TO MAKE THEIR POSTS MORE AVAILABLE.

3. AN INCREASE IN SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN PORTS OF TIVAT
AND BIJELA, KOTOR BAY, IN REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO, HAS BEEN
NOTED. WHAT APPEARS TO BE SOVIET NAVAL VESSEL, A HEAVY
BUOY TENDER (KIL-25), IN MUFTI HAS BEEN SEEN IN BIJELA, AN
OTHERWISE CIVILIAN PORT. OFFICIAL YUGOSLAVS WHEN CONFRONTED
WITH DIRECT QUESTION ON KIL-25 HAVE CLAIMED THAT VESSEL
IS COMMERCIAL. PERSISTENT QUERIES ON OUR PART AS WELL AS
FOREIGN PRESS REPORTING HAVE ENSURED THAT YUGOSLAVS ARE
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AWARE OF OUR CONCERN OVER ANY INCREASED SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE

ALONG ADRIATIC.

NOTE: COINCIDENTALLY, YUGOSLAV IN BIJELA TOLD POLCOUNS OVER WEEKEND THAT YUGOSLAV WORKERS IN BIJELA SHIPYARDS ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT THEY NOW HAVE A CONTRACT FOR REPAIR AND SERVICING OF SOVIET SHIPS. UNTIL NOW, SHIPYARD DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH BUSINESS TO SUSTAIN IT. NOW THEY EXPECT TO BE HANDLING "MAINLY" SOVIET VESSELS.

4. UNDOUBTEDLY RELATED TO SOVIET DESIRE BROADER USE YUGOSLAV PORTS IS CURRENT VISIT BY SOVIET ADM. GORSHKOV TO YUGOSLAVIA. WE FIRST LEARNED THAT VISIT WAS UPCOMING FROM TANJUG REPORT ON ARTICLE IN SOVIET DEFMIN ORGAN KRASNAJA ZVEZDA. YUGOSLAV PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN LOW-KEY THUS FAR WITH ONLY BRIEF REFERENCE TO GORSHKOV'S AUGUST 18 ARRIVAL IN PAPERS AND TV NEWS COVERAGE AUGUST 19. DEFENSE SECRETARIAT'S FOREIGN LIAISON SERVICE CLAIMS GORSHKOV IS MERELY RETURNING VISIT TO USSR PAID BY CURRENT YUGOSLAV NAVY CHIEF'S PREDECESSOR SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

5. GORSHKOV SPENT FIRST DAY IN BELGRADE MEETING DEFSEC LJUBICIC AND OTHER MILITARY LEADERS, AND VISITED SPLIT AUGUST 19 AND TIVAT AUGUST 20. HE WAS LATER SEEN SAME DAY ON BOARD YUGOSLAV NAVAL YACHT TOURING KOTOR BAY. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, HE IS STILL IN YUGOSLAVIA.

6. UNLIKELY THAT YUGOSLAVS WOULD ADMIT TO GRANTING ANY CONCESSIONS TO SOVIETS FOR INCREASED PORT USAGE. WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL FOR NATO COUNTRIES TO MAKE COMMON AND CONCERTED EFFORT TO KEEP YUGOSLAVS AWARE OF OUR VIGILANCE AND CONCERN ON THIS CENTRAL ISSUE.

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